

Universal Design Standards for Apartments

Summary and Benefits:

The goal of universal design is to make the built environment as accessible as possible to people of all ages and abilities without adaptation or specialized design. Universal design features come at little to no extra cost if incorporated in a project as it gets built while significantly reducing or eliminating the need to later retrofit the structure for accessibility.

The principles of universal design as defined by the Center for Universal Design are as follows:

- **Equitable use:** the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities
- **Flexibility in use:** the design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
- **Simple and intuitive use:** use of the design is easy to understand regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level
- **Perceptible information:** the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities
- **Tolerance for error:** The design minimizes the adverse consequences of unintended actions
- **Low physical effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue
- **Size and space for approach and use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility

For residential properties universal design features could include:

- No-step entry
- Wider interior doors and hallways
- Audio & visual doorbell
- At least one bathroom or powder room on the primary entry level
- Hand-held adjustable shower head
- Kitchen on an accessible route of entry.

Potential Policies:

- The City of Dublin requires that all new construction of single family homes and apartment buildings in excess of 20 units, include certain universal design features to make properties as accessible as possible.

Model Ordinances/Useful Sources:

- City of Dublin, link: <http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/dublin/dublin07/Dublin0790.html>
- City of Dublin universal design checklist: <http://dublin.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/59>
- HCD Model Universal Design Ordinance: http://www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/shl/3-Text-Universal_Design_Model_Ordinance.pdf
- Principles of Universal Design from the Center for Universal Design: http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf